United Nations E/2008/34 (Part II)-E/ICEF/2008/7 (Part II)

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
6 August 2008

Original: English

Report of the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund on the work of its 2008 annual session

(3-5 June 2008)*

* The present document is an advance version of the report of the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund on its annual session (3-5 June 2008). The report on the first regular session (29 January-1 February 2008) and the second regular session (15-18 September 2008) are issued as parts I and III, respectively. These reports will be issued in final form as *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2008, Supplement 14* (E/2008/34/Rev.1-E/ICEF/2008/7/Rev.1).

08-45285 (E) 280808

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I. Organization of the session

A. Opening of the session

1. The President welcomed two new Vice-Presidents of the Bureau of the Executive Board: H.E. Mr. Gert Rosenthal of Guatemala and H.E. Mr. Simona Miculescu of Romania, who replaced H.E. Mr. Jorge Skinner-Klée of Guatemala, and H.E. Mr. Mihnea Ioan Motoc of Romania. Expressing sympathy and concern for the victims of the recent cyclone in Myanmar and the earthquake in the Sichuan Province of China, the President emphasized the key role of UNICEF in relief efforts and the importance of securing children's rights to protection in disasters. He also emphasized the crucial role of UNICEF in addressing the global food crisis and undernutrition.

2. Turning to the agenda item on the annual report of the Executive Director, he said the report cited many achievements of UNICEF and its partners, including the fact that the number of annual deaths of children under five fell below 10 million, to 9.7 million, for the first time. Challenges persisted, however, including in providing antiretroviral treatment for women and children with HIV, and in assisting children orphaned through HIV/AIDS. Emphasizing the importance of gender as a cross-cutting strategy of the UNICEF medium-term strategic plan (MTSP), he looked forward to discussing the involvement of the Executive Board in the follow-up process of the Evaluation of Gender Policy Implementation in UNICEF. He noted the important agenda items on the Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative and the planned global strategy on collaborative relationships and partnerships and emphasized that working in partnerships was increasingly important to fulfilling the commitments of the Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals. In this regard, he praised the ongoing contributions made by the National Committees for UNICEF.

3. The Executive Director, in her opening remarks, briefly summarized the assistance provided by UNICEF to the victims of the cyclone in Myanmar and the earthquake in China. These crises underscored the fact that special attention needs to be paid to natural disasters and the capacity of national governments to respond. She also described promising areas of UNICEF work in the post-conflict countries of Liberia and Sierra Leone, including in accelerated education and nutrition for children. Nutrition was also an important topic at the high-level Tokyo International Conference on African Development, where the Executive Director had launched on behalf of UNICEF the first-ever *State of Africa's Children* report, focused on child survival. Among other key issues for UNICEF addressed at the conference were overcoming challenges to achieving the Millennium Development Goals; engaging and enabling local communities; the need for integrated community-based health systems; education as key to poverty alleviation; the importance of credible data, evaluation and monitoring; and the need to focus on youth and the role of women.

4. Children, especially those under two, are among the most vulnerable to rising food and energy prices, issues that were given special attention at the Tokyo conference. UNICEF, a member of the United Nations Secretary-General's High Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis, addressing the impact of rising food prices, was working with partners to respond to the crisis, including through the Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative.

B. Adoption of the agenda

5. The Executive Board adopted the agenda, timetable and organization of work (E/ICEF/2008/9/Rev.1) of the session. One delegation requested that UNICEF provide an update during the session on the organization's response to the cyclone in Myanmar and the earthquake in China.

6. In accordance with rule 50.2 of the rules of procedure, the Secretary of the Executive Board announced that credentials had been submitted by 38 observer delegations.

II. Deliberations of the Executive Board

A. Annual report of the Executive Director: progress and achievements against the medium-term strategic plan (agenda item 3)

7. The report (E/ICEF/2008/10) was introduced by the Executive Director, who described key achievements in 2007 in each of the five focus areas of the MTSP. She also drew attention to the data companion to the annual report, which provided the latest available information and year-to-year trends for a wide range of targets and key indicators of UNICEF performance.

8. Delegations congratulated UNICEF for the notable progress made in the five focus areas of the MTSP, including in humanitarian situations. The continued interrelation of efforts to achieve the targets of the MTSP and the Millennium Development Goals made the MTSP a stronger instrument for advancing children's rights. One delegation mentioned the need to implement the "internationally agreed" Millennium Development Goals.

9. Many delegations welcomed progress in child survival, noting particularly the significant reduction of measles-related deaths and the milestone decline in the global annual number of young child deaths to below 10 million. However, they recognized the continued need to accelerate improvements in child, maternal and neonatal health, the provision of water and sanitation, polio eradication and the incidence of malaria.

10. UNICEF was praised for progress made in several areas: (a) work with communities and subnational authorities for the provision of basic services; (b) basic education, especially in the establishment of child-friendly schools and the adoption of quality standards for education; (c) the establishment of more extensive partnerships to improve sanitation worldwide; (d) successful work in building national systems for child protection; and (e) scaling up improved family and community care practices.

11. The global food crisis was widely cited as a threat to the continuing progress in child survival and development. Delegations welcomed the active participation of UNICEF in the work of the Secretary-General's High Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis to ensure that children's needs were met in both the short and the long term.

12. Some delegations called for research on the effects of migration on children and for more reporting on the work of UNICEF in a number of areas: providing quality learning to out-of-school children; the challenges faced in the eradication of polio; strengthening juvenile justice; how lessons learned are analysed and fed back into the programming process; strengthening the capacity of national partners; and determining whether the Accelerated Child Survival and Development initiative will be expanded beyond Africa. Some delegations requested that the results matrices of the MTSP report on all indicators.

13. Regarding HIV/AIDS, several successes were acknowledged, including the integration of HIV/AIDS education in school curricula. Concern was expressed about the apparent understatement of the share of programme funds spent on combating HIV and AIDS, and a recommendation was made for system improvements that would better capture expenditures on HIV and AIDS.

14. Delegations also acknowledged the strengthening of the capacity of the organization to respond to humanitarian crises and the leadership role of UNICEF in humanitarian clusters at the global and country levels. However, several delegations expressed concern about the challenge of meeting the MTSP target on staff recruitment for emergencies.

15. Speakers expressed satisfaction with the importance UNICEF attached to human rights-based approaches to programming and with the strengthening of the focus of cooperation on the most vulnerable children and their families.

16. Several delegations asked that UNICEF continue to strengthen its role in middle-income countries, particularly in supporting these countries to address widening disparities. It was recommended that UNICEF forge stronger alliances with the private sector in these countries, encouraging a deeper sense of corporate social responsibility.

17. UNICEF was requested to intensify its strategic partnerships generally in order to deliver widespread and sustainable results for children around the world. It was noted that without strategic partnerships, the goals of *A World Fit for Children* and the Millennium Development Goals could not be achieved.

18. Many delegations recognized the need to integrate gender into all aspects of the organization's work, recommending that policies and programmes be aligned with the recommendations of the evaluation report on the implementation of the gender policy in UNICEF.

19. Many speakers thanked UNICEF for the consultation process taking place around the midterm review of the MTSP, to be discussed at the 2008 second regular session. Two delegations voiced support for the extension of the MTSP to 2011, in order to align planning cycles with those of the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund and with the lead-up to the 2015 deadline of the Millennium Development Goals. It was noted that the midterm review would provide an opportunity to assess what actions needed to be accelerated for the achievement of the Goals and to consider how UNICEF will address emerging issues, such as climate change, urbanization and migration.

20. A number of delegations praised the efforts of UNICEF to strengthen accountability and efficiency. Several speakers commended the Executive Director for the organizational review and said they looked forward to discussing the progress of the 10 key improvement initiatives that had been launched. UNICEF was requested to further strengthen results-based management approaches in its work and to address the underlying issues on recruitment identified in the annual report.

21. While noting progress made in ensuring a results focus in the annual report, some delegations asked UNICEF to further streamline the report, paying more attention to outcomes, impact and the use of resources. Noting that the data companion provided much of the required information on results, delegations asked for its integration into the annual report, possibly as an annex.

22. The continued shift of UNICEF to support upstream policy work was acknowledged, as was the organization's increased engagement in sector-wide approaches, the promotion of child-friendly poverty-reduction strategies and budgets, and joint work with other United Nations agencies at the country level.

23. Appreciation was expressed for the commitment of UNICEF to implementing the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. Several delegations pointed out the challenges associated with Delivering as One, including in harmonizing the differences between agencies in their rules, planning cycles, reporting requirements, procurement systems and other business practices. Savings from coherence efforts should be transferred to spending on programmes. Speakers called for a strengthened role of the Resident Coordinator, and emphasized that elements of the reform package implemented in a particular country should depend on local requirements. At the global level as well, it was recommended that UNICEF further harmonize its systems with those of other agencies.

24. Many delegations expressed concern about the decreasing proportion of regular resources to the total, noting that the dominance of other resources could lead to fragmentation of programming.

25. Thanking Executive Board members for their comments and questions, the Executive Director expressed her appreciation to countries for advancing the rights of children. She emphasized the commitment of UNICEF to results-based management, with results achieved evident in the data companion. She said that attributing results to individual agencies was difficult in the context of wider partnership for achieving results; UNICEF used the Millennium Development Goals and the MTSP targets as its benchmarks. Noting that evaluations were useful in determining what worked and what did not, she stated that UNICEF had been working on establishing a stronger research base, including through the Innocenti Research Centre. Partner surveys had been piloted in the past year and would be continued.

26. The Executive Director further emphasized that UNICEF would continue to have a strong development and humanitarian focus. She underlined the fact that though UNICEF did not achieve the MTSP target on recruitment for emergencies, the numbers did not reflect the real progress UNICEF had made in staff deployment to countries and regions affected by disasters through the use of its surge capacity and other arrangements. Regarding recruitment in general, she said that the annual

report explained that some posts were put on hold because of anticipated changes in the support budget.

27. Stating that gender issues were central to development, the Executive Director cited examples of the promising work of UNICEF in the field to address sexual violence and other gender issues. At headquarters, she said, a senior staff member would be designated to follow up on recommendations of the evaluation of gender policy implementation in UNICEF.

28. She said that UNICEF would also continue to maximize strategic partnerships and collaborative opportunities to benefit children.

29. In response to comments about the global food crisis, the Executive Director explained that addressing the crisis and its impact on child nutrition was a high priority for UNICEF. The organization actively participated in United Nations system-wide efforts of the Secretary-General and would continue to work with countries on ongoing initiatives, including food fortification, provision of therapeutic feeding for the severely malnourished, supplementation with micronutrients, and promotion of exclusive breastfeeding.

30. UNICEF was continuing support for polio eradication, discussing efforts with senior officials of affected countries.

31. UNICEF continued to be committed to United Nations coherence, reflecting the priorities of host Governments, and was working as part of the High Level Committee on Management of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination of the United Nations System on harmonizing different rules and regulations on a system-wide basis. She noted that there was a need for more active participation in the successful sector-wide approaches.

32. The Executive Director explained how expenditure on HIV and AIDS had been reported, adding that UNICEF would continue to monitor closely such expenditure in the future.

33. Referring to the suggestion to include the data companion in the annual report, the Executive Director reminded delegations of the strict word limit for official United Nations documents and said that the data companion would continue to be presented as a complementary report.

34. In conclusion, the Executive Director confirmed that UNICEF would continue to work to ensure that the decline in childhood mortality continued, in part thanks to the use of accelerated child survival approaches in and beyond Africa. She said UNICEF was thankful for the collaboration with countries and partners and would continue to work towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

35. The Executive Board adopted decision 2008/11 (see annex).

B. UNICEF global strategy for collaborative relationships and partnerships: a preliminary concept note (agenda item 4)

36. The Director of Private Fundraising and Partnerships introduced the preliminary concept note on the UNICEF global strategy for collaborative relationships and partnerships (E/ICEF/2008/12). The strategy, he said, had been driven by the need for organization-wide clarity on collaborative relationships and partnerships and by the new imperatives of the fast-changing development landscape. The Director emphasized the need for new and effective systems to guide the organization's strategic engagement with Governments, the private sector and civil society, as well as with partners in the United Nations system and international financial institutions. He stressed the importance of mobilizing all stakeholders to deliver better results for children and for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. He assured the Executive Board that the process of developing the strategy, to be finalized for discussion at the annual session of 2009, would include regular consultations with internal and external stakeholders, including multilateral partners, civil society organizations, private sector partners and members of the Executive Board.

37. Delegations thanked UNICEF for the preliminary concept note, which was generally considered to be concise and informative, and pledged their continued support to the work of UNICEF with partners. Several delegations recommended that the strategy contribute to UNICEF core functions; improve programme implementation; and provide effective influence on existing mechanisms and partnerships. Some delegations also requested that further linkages be made with other strategies, including Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS, and with the MTSP and its midterm review.

38. While some delegations said that the preliminary concept note provided a solid foundation, others requested that it be more specific and provide detailed information on existing partnerships, as the Executive Board had requested.

39. The representative of the Standing Group of National Committees for UNICEF took the floor to highlight the contribution made by National Committees to the resources of UNICEF, which represent about a third of the total income; to the promotion of UNICEF work around the world; and to the building of good relationships with Governments, NGOs and other partners. The representative said that the Group looked forward to participating further in the development of the strategy for partnerships.

40. Several delegations remarked that the concept note emphasized the importance of partnerships but did not outline how existing partnerships were functioning, why some functioned better than others, what lessons had been learned from them, and how this information would be utilized in developing the new strategy. The secretariat responded that a number of partnership reviews were still under way. These included the evaluation of global programme partnerships and the review of private sector partnerships. Key findings of these reviews would inform the global strategy.

41. It was also noted that the concept note did not specifically recognize relationships with National Committees for UNICEF and with Governments as 'partnerships', even though these relationships were critical to capacity-building and to achieving timely results for children. The

secretariat explained that National Committees were considered to be part of the UNICEF organization, and not external partners. If the strategy addressed direct relationships with Governments, it would encompass too large a scope and risk becoming a parallel MTSP.

42. UNICEF was requested to hold consultations with the Executive Board in autumn 2008 and spring 2009 to provide updates on progress on development of the strategy and to further consult on outstanding issues.

C. Proposals for UNICEF programme cooperation (agenda item 5)

(a) Draft country programme documents (CPDs)

43. The Director, Programmes, provided an overview of the nine draft country programme documents before the Executive Board.

West and Central Africa

44. The Regional Director for West and Central Africa introduced the draft CPDs for Benin, Republic of the Congo, Niger and Nigeria (E/ICEF/2008/P/L.4 and Corr.1 through E/ICEF/2008/P/L.7 and Corr.1). The draft CPD for Niger was presented in conjunction with the report of the field visit of members of the Executive Board to Niger.

45. The representative of **Benin** thanked UNICEF for its support and requested clarification on several points in the draft CPD regarding factors that would hinder implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. These included the under-representation of children in government policies and the nature and extent of child trafficking. The representative emphasized the need for greater funding from regular resources, especially in proportion to other resources.

46. Also speaking on the draft CPD for Benin, one delegation suggested that the objectives were too ambitious for a four-year period and requested information on strategies to be used by UNICEF to reach those objectives and programme coverage. Additional clarification was requested as well on partnerships, especially with the private sector. With regard to child trafficking, UNICEF should concentrate its efforts in the parts of the country where the problem is most acute. In education, efforts should extend beyond the formal system to reach children out of school.

47. The representative of **Niger** highlighted his Government's commitment to the well-being of children and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. He noted that the Executive Board had visited Niger during the year and was able to obtain a sense of the huge challenges children still face in his country, especially in the areas of child survival, access to basic services and maternal mortality. Despite the country's several notable successes in areas such as reducing child mortality, decreasing HIV/AIDS prevalence and combating malaria, Niger required massive support from its partners. He welcomed the efforts of UNICEF and all bilateral and multilateral partners.

48. One speaker, commenting on the Niger programme, praised the actions of UNICEF, in particular in reducing malnutrition, and in women's education, but emphasized that the programme

could be more ambitious in its aim to reduce acute malnutrition. He also encouraged UNICEF to ensure greater coordination with partners.

49. The Minister of Women's Affairs and Social Development of **Nigeria** conveyed her Government's appreciation of the cooperation with UNICEF and highlighted several of her Government's recent achievements, accomplished with the support of UNICEF, in areas of policy development (e.g., the passage of the Child Rights Act, National Child Policy, national guidelines on the establishment and management of orphanages), capacity-building of national institutions responsible for child protection, birth registration, and HIV/AIDS. She emphasized the Government's priorities in the areas of child survival, education and poverty reduction.

50. Two delegations, commenting on the draft CPD for Nigeria, emphasized the importance of polio eradication and the commitment of their countries to supporting eradication efforts in endemic countries. One delegation highlighted the threat posed to neighbouring countries by the increasing number of polio cases in Nigeria.

51. The Regional Director responded to comments on the various draft CPDs. In Benin, the education programme covered out-of-school children in special education programmes, and regular resources were allocated based on the formula approved by the Executive Board. In Niger, there was a need to further reduce the high malnutrition rates. In Nigeria and other countries, UNICEF was committed to polio eradication.

Middle East and North Africa

52. The Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa introduced the draft CPD for Sudan (E/ICEF/2008/P/L.12 and Corr.1) for 2009-2012, which was designed to contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, the Five Year Strategic Plan of the Government of National Unity, and the three-year Budget Plan of the Government of Southern Sudan.

53. The representative of the **Republic of the Sudan** expressed gratitude for the cooperation between the Government and UNICEF, saying that the programme reinforced the efforts Sudan made to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The representative acknowledged the donor countries for their support to the programme; only with this support could rehabilitation and reconstruction plans be achieved. Appreciation was expressed for the fact that the CPD was prepared in close collaboration with UNICEF, the Ministry of International Cooperation, and partners in the South. Responding to comments made during discussion of the CPD, the representative said that any interventions or attempts to politicize the programme were unacceptable.

54. A number of delegations commended the work of UNICEF in Sudan, particularly in advancing the situation of children in the areas of health, education and protection, and expressed appreciation of the effort to harmonize the programme cycle with national plans. The country programme was coherent and the goals achievable.

55. One delegation said that such a large programme demanded internal capacity and a focus on peace-building, climate change, gender equality and access to water and food. An integrated approach on the part of the United Nations was important, especially in relation to child protection.

56. Another delegation alerted UNICEF to discrepancies in statistical data on the indicators for under-five mortality. The delegation requested more clarity on the issue of financing social transfers and offered assistance in this regard. Important progress had been made in education; however, it was important to stress access, quality education, increased retention, reduced dropout rates and education for girls. UNICEF was encouraged to report on key progress indicators of quality rather than quantity in the results matrix.

57. A delegation requested more in-depth analysis of the prevailing situation in Sudan, especially regarding alternative water sources. Specific challenges of different regions should be taken into account to implement the programme. Also highlighted as important were capacity development, the strengthening of monitoring and evaluation capacity, quality indicators and outcomes, and improved analytical work in the areas of child poverty and rights. There was a need for an improved database system related to the development goals. Child protection strategies were an integral part of UNICEF work in Sudan.

58. In response, the Regional Director underlined the importance of capacity-building as an organizational priority and of girls' education and retention in school. Regarding supporting systems, UNICEF was working towards a systems approach rather than social transfers. As for statistical data, she would check with the country office and respond to the delegations bilaterally. She underlined that UNICEF was strategically positioned to deliver on the ground in coordination with partners and that the role of UNICEF in furthering peace dividends was reflected throughout all sectors, including health, education and protection.

Americas and the Caribbean

59. The Regional Director for the Americas and the Caribbean introduced the draft short-duration CPDs for Ecuador (E/ICEF/2008/P/L.8) and Guatemala (E/ICEF/2008/P/L.9 and Corr.1). Both extensions were requested in order to allow more time for the new Governments in these countries and the respective United Nations country teams to discuss priorities and strategies.

60. The representative of **Guatemala** expressed gratitude for UNICEF cooperation, which had contributed to various advancements for children, including the establishment of legal and decentralized institutional frameworks for child protection systems, and support of intercultural bilingual education. He emphasized his Government's commitment to jointly addressing the existing development challenges, especially chronic malnutrition and challenges faced by the large indigenous population, and to implementing the recently adopted Law on Adoptions. Last, he raised a concern about the reduction in regular resources in the draft CPD for Guatemala and inquired about the reason for the decrease.

61. The need to focus on indigenous populations was strongly echoed by both the Regional Director and other delegations, who encouraged UNICEF to further prioritize excluded indigenous

populations in the next CPD for the full programme cycle, including by supporting bilingual education in Maya and Spanish. Several delegations also stressed the importance of the timely support of UNICEF to implementing the country's new law on adoptions.

62. The Regional Director also highlighted the challenge of chronic malnutrition in the region, a key indicator of hunger, as demonstrated by a recent joint report launched by United Nations agencies on health-related Millennium Development Goals in Latin America and the Caribbean. One speaker stressed the importance of the role of UNICEF in implementing national emergency measures to combat malnutrition. Another speaker encouraged UNICEF to increase its actions to address violence against children.

63. The representative of **Ecuador** praised UNICEF for its support and cooperation in Ecuador. She highlighted her Government's commitment to increasing social investment; to funding the country's newly adopted development plan through resources derived from the oil industry; to continuing its subsidy programme for vulnerable children and women; and to supporting UNICEF in its work with the National Council for Children. She questioned the reason for the reduction of 10 per cent in regular resources funding in the draft CPD for Ecuador.

64. In response, the Regional Director noted that regular resources funding was an issue of global scope and suggested that it be addressed at that level.

South Asia

65. The Regional Director for South Asia introduced the draft country programme documents for Afghanistan (E/ICEF/2008/P/L.10 and Corr.1) and Pakistan (E/ICEF/2008/P/L.11).

66. The representative of **Afghanistan** welcomed the proposed one-year extension of the country programme document aimed to align programme cycles supported by the United Nations with the Afghanistan National Development Strategy Framework. Thanking UNICEF for its continuous support, he highlighted the need to increase the budget allocation for child protection, as the protection of children against violence, exploitation and abuse was a high priority. Another high priority was the food crisis, which required assistance from UNICEF through the strengthening of emergency preparedness and school feeding. He pointed out that insecurity caused by the resurgence of terrorist activities, especially in the southern and eastern parts of the country, remained the major obstacle in improving the lives of Afghan children and women. Synergy and consolidation of activities of the United Nations system were essential to improve the impact of aid.

67. A number of delegations emphasized that the extensive budget and the variety of components of the country programme covering most parts of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy Framework showed that UNICEF was a central development partner in Afghanistan. Information was requested on UNICEF support to facilitating Afghanistan's reporting on child rights. While underlining the need for UNICEF to work closely with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in protecting children affected by conflict, delegations recommended that UNICEF increase the budget allocation to child protection; focus on hard-to-reach provinces for education; and continue to provide assistance to a wide number of programmes in the country,

including in the less stable provinces. UNICEF, in preparing for the next phase of the programme, should continue to mainstream gender in all focus areas, including through the disaggregation of data.

68. Another delegation emphasized the importance of emergency response and humanitarian support, especially attention paid to the needs of children and women affected by violence and to gender-based violence. Information was requested on how the country programme response to the 2007 Humanitarian Action Report linked with and supported efforts of the ongoing development of the Common Humanitarian Action Plan.

69. The representative of **Pakistan** confirmed that the draft country programme document had been developed in close collaboration with United Nations agencies and development partners. The Government of Pakistan had volunteered to be one of the eight pilot countries to implement the recommendations of the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence. The extension of the 2004-2008 United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) to 2010, aligning the Framework with national planning cycles, necessitated this short-duration country programme for 2009. He said that programme strategies had linked education and health components with child protection and social protection measures and the strengthening of policy dialogue and advocacy. This was in keeping with Pakistan's change in focus from service delivery to greater engagement in policy dialogue and advocacy with key stakeholders to achieve better results.

70. One delegation, speaking on the draft CPD for Pakistan, said that UNICEF was playing an important role in the implementation of the One UN pilot and called upon UNICEF headquarters to provide the necessary flexibility and support for this process.

71. In response, the Regional Director noted that the Humanitarian Action Report and the requirements of the UNICEF emergency appeal for Afghanistan were fed into to the Common Humanitarian Action Plan. He expressed support for recommendations made to strengthen national capacity and emergency preparedness in that country and for increased consolidation of efforts of partners. UNICEF worked closely with Ministries and other partners to facilitate reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. UNICEF was experimenting with a number of strategies for outreach to vulnerable populations and worked closely with UNAMA, particularly in child protection. Gender issues were being addressed in a wider range of programmes.

72. The Regional Director highlighted the important role played by the Government of Pakistan in emergency efforts in that country and elsewhere, with technical support provided by UNICEF. UNICEF had been a strong supporter of the very important One UN pilot programme in Pakistan, helping to move the process forward. He welcomed the delegation's recommendation for ensuring UNICEF headquarters' flexibility and support for these efforts in Pakistan.

Approval of draft country programme documents

73. In decision 2008/8, the Executive Board approved the aggregate indicative budgets of the country programme documents for full programme cycles, and approved, in their entirety, the country programme documents for short-duration programme cycles. (See decision 2008/8 in the annex.)

74. The President informed the Executive Board that the draft country programme documents for full programme cycles would be revised, taking into consideration comments made during the discussion, and posted on the UNICEF website within six weeks of the session. The revised country programme documents will be approved by the Executive Board on a no-objection basis at the second regular session of 2008, unless at least five members inform the secretariat in writing of their wish to bring a particular country programme before the Executive Board.

75. In a statement made under "Other matters", several delegations referred to Executive Board decision 2006/19 and said that it was their understanding that UNICEF was to present a list of draft country programme documents for which discussion was to be deferred to the second regular session of the Executive Board, along with the reasons for the deferral. The delegations requested that, in the future, UNICEF provide the Executive Board with such a list ahead of the annual session.

D. Evaluation of gender policy implementation in UNICEF: planned follow-up action (agenda item 6)

76. The Associate Director for Gender, Rights and Civic Engagement (Policy and Practice) presented a summary of the key findings and recommendations of the recent evaluation of the gender policy implementation in UNICEF, together with the organization's follow-up plan, as set out in Executive Board document E/ICEF/2008/CRP.12.

77. She noted that the evaluation highlighted some of the key strengths of UNICEF in promoting gender equality, including many good practices, which were supported by the commitment of managers and UNICEF staff members in general to human rights and social justice. UNICEF demonstrated several weaknesses and shortfalls in its implementation of gender equality: limited staff capacity; weak accountability; ad hoc application of the gender equality policy; inadequate senior-level commitment; and confusion on the part of staff between the policy on gender equality and gender parity in the workplace on the one hand and the pursuit of gender equality results in programmes on the other. Similar weaknesses were experienced by other United Nations agencies and partners as well. UNICEF nevertheless had strong potential to be a leader in gender equality. The organization was undertaking a three-phase response over the short and long term, and development of a gender action plan.

78. Delegations welcomed the evaluation and its key recommendations and findings as well as the openness and transparency of UNICEF in sharing the results. There was general agreement that gender equality was crucial to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. It was emphasized that the empowerment of women had a strong impact on children's health and well-being.

79. The positive results and good practices already achieved by UNICEF were praised by delegations, who made several suggestions for the follow-up response to the evaluation's findings and recommendations: integrate a gender perspective into every aspect of the work of UNICEF; revise the 1994 gender policy and consult with Executive Board members in the process; revise gender policies frequently, perhaps every 5 to 10 years; develop conceptual tools and standards; formulate clear objectives, concrete and time-bound actions and a strong system of accountability; track and monitor allocations and expenditures for gender equality results as part of the results-based management

approach; monitor and evaluate progress; report annually in the Executive Director's annual report on progress in achieving gender equality results; develop staff capacity in the promotion of gender equality and parity, recognizing it as a key competency, and hire new experts at the global, regional and country levels; encourage stronger commitment on the part of senior management; and strengthen partnerships at all levels, within the United Nations system and beyond.

80. Delegations also stressed the need to pay particular attention to country-specific and cultural contexts in gender analysis, in the drafting of a gender action plan and in the revision of the gender policy.

81. It was generally recognized that UNICEF could become a leader in gender equality, given the organization's strong field presence, rights-based approach, and partnerships. In this regard, the efforts of UNICEF to foster a common approach on gender within the United Nations country team were welcomed. The midpoint of the 2006-2009 MTSP presented a good window of opportunity for action.

82. In response, the Executive Director reiterated her strong personal commitment to gender equality. She underlined the importance of gender equality in achieving sustainable development and the inextricable link between the empowerment of women and the well-being of children. Citing examples of ongoing work in gender equality, specifically in the fields of education and sexual and gender-based violence, she stressed the need to reinforce such actions.

83. The Associate Director for Gender, Rights and Civic Engagement explained that the process of consultations with delegations and partners was laid out in phase II of the response. She also stressed the importance of partnerships and need for UNICEF to learn from the good practices of its partners, pointing out that UNICEF was already working with other agencies to share experiences in advancing gender equality.

84. She agreed with the suggestion that further efforts were needed to adapt gender equality programming to country-level and culture-specific contexts, and referred to existing guidelines for Situation Analysis reports on identifying gender disparities and their causes. She also agreed that midpoint of the MTSP presented a crucial and unique opportunity for UNICEF to act. Noting that it was not entirely feasible at this point to reconfigure UNICEF financial systems to track expenditures for gender equality, she said that it would be more productive to concentrate efforts on tracking results and emphasized that the suggestion to develop conceptual tools and standards would be taken seriously.

85. In decision 2008/10, the Executive Board requested UNICEF to present at its first regular session of 2009 a management response to all recommendations of the evaluation, including actions and timeframes for completion.

86. The Executive Board adopted decision 2008/10 (see annex).

E. Report on implementation of the Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative (agenda item 7)

87. The Executive Board had before it the report (E/ICEF/2008/11), which was introduced by the Director, Programmes. He summarized recent developments in implementing the Initiative, including the formation of a joint secretariat in early 2008 at the World Food Programme (WFP) in Rome, with one senior staff member each from WFP, the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF. UNICEF had allocated $300,000 from regular resources to support this effort.

88. The ECHUI secretariat has developed a framework for the coordination of strategy and programme development, as well as communication materials, and had launched coordination of inter-agency interventions at country level. An analysis of the effectiveness of existing national programmes had started in a number of countries.

89. Four key actions had been identified for promotion and scale-up as part of the support to national programmes. In response to the rising food prices, the initiative will aim to provide leadership in ensuring that priority is given to the most vulnerable children and women. In addition to coordinated support for country programmes, the initiative will continue to build national capacity to detect and strengthen systems for managing malnutrition from 0-5 years of age, and expand the use of Ready-to-use Therapeutic Foods (RUTFs). UNICEF had recently released technical guidelines for country office use of RUTFs, such as Plumpy'nut®.

90. Several delegations expressed their support for UNICEF involvement in this initiative, emphasizing the importance of addressing child undernutrition and hunger in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. ECHUI was also viewed as an important area of cooperation among various United Nations agencies. Several factors undermined initiatives to alleviate hunger and under nutrition, including unequal distribution of income, the negative impact of the production of bio-fuels on food stuffs, and environmental degradation.

91. In addition to country delegations, the representative of Rotary International indicated his organization's support for the initiative. Both of the two worldwide resource groups of Rotary, one dealing with water and sanitation and the other with health concerns, will be working on the initiative.

92. There was a widespread recognition by many delegations of the importance of addressing the rising food prices and the food security crisis. Requests were made for more information on the plans of UNICEF to address the food crisis, including details on how complementarities with existing initiatives and activities would be assured; how interventions would be targeted and prioritized; and how the national situations would be monitored. It was important to emphasize gender issues and the vulnerability of women as well strengthening capacity in developing countries both through North-South and South-South cooperation. In Latin America, increases in food prices were likely to pull many people into poverty.

93. It was emphasized that States need to invest in rural and agricultural activities; to promote local foods and local solutions; and to evaluate the impact of international trade standards, agreements and subsidies on the food crisis. Several delegations asked for information on the collaboration

between UNICEF and other international agencies regarding food fortification to address anaemia and other micronutrient deficiencies.

94. Some delegations expressed concern that the ECHUI could become a centrally led initiative that could undermine the response at country level. To counter this possibility, it was important to consult national Governments on priority areas and utilize country analyses and studies on the effectiveness of existing country programmes. ECHUI should support country-led integrated approaches to improving the nutritional status of children.

95. It was recognized by several delegations that women and children were at the highest risk of experiencing undernutrition and that it was crucial to reach children under two, as 0-2 years represented a critical age when nutrition was most needed. Programmes should prioritize these groups, focusing more on women, not only to improve outcomes for children but also to support gender equality, a key organizational mandate of UNICEF.

96. One delegation suggested scale-up of school feeding programmes in response to the food crisis; these would have the added benefit of increasing enrolment and attendance rates.

97. The secretariat took note of the comments and responded to delegations' questions. Several recommendations were noted in particular: the need to improve nutrition in a child's early years; the usefulness of school feeding programmes, which also buttress household income and food availability; the importance of country-level analysis and assessments in order to determine the best interventions to be supported as part of the young child survival, growth, and development strategies; and the need for a nationally led international response. It was noted that UNICEF, as a member of the Secretary-General's task force on the food crisis, will continue to monitor and respond to the situation. It was further noted that responses would also be strengthened at the country level: all UNICEF country offices have been analysing the situation and have started to strengthen their programmatic and policy level work to support national programmes and efforts.

F. Reports of the field visits of the Executive Board (agenda item 8)

(a) Report of the field visit to the Lao People's Democratic Republic by members of the Bureau of the Executive Board, 9 to 16 February 2008

98. The Executive Board had before it the report of the field visit (E/ICEF/2008/13), which was introduced by the President of the Bureau and Executive Board, following a short film on the visit. Praising the "excellent" programme in the country, he applauded the priority attention being given to children by the Government. He said this support was critical in a country where nearly a quarter of the population lives on less than $1 a day. He highlighted the efforts of UNICEF and its partners in education, especially for girls and for children in hard-to-reach communities, describing successful work in the promotion of child-friendly schools and school feeding programmes that benefited children and their families.

99. The representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the United Nations expressed his appreciation for the visit. He praised the successful 2007-2011 programme of cooperation of his country with UNICEF, adding that partnerships were crucial to ensuring its success.

(b) Report of the joint field visit to Haiti of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme, 1 to 9 March 2008

100. The report (E/ICEF/2008/CRP.11 and DP-FPA/2008/CRP.1) was introduced by H.E. Mr. Pavle Jevremović, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Serbia to the United Nations, and member of the UNICEF Executive Board.

101. Ambassador Jevremović cited the many challenges faced by Haiti, a fragile State with weak institutions, and highlighted the "impressive" contribution of UNICEF to the complex integrated United Nations mission in Haiti.

102. Ms. Anna Ovcharenko, delegate of the Russian Federation and Rapporteur for the 20-member field visit, then presented the report, which focused on United Nations system-wide issues.

103. The representative of Haiti expressed appreciation for the support of UNICEF in the areas of child protection, potable water for schools, gender equality and education, especially education for children with disabilities.

(c) Report of the field visit to Niger by members of the Executive Board, 29 March to 4 April 2008

104. Following a short film on the field visit to Niger by members of the Executive Board, H.E. Mr. Robert Hill, Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations, introduced the report (E/ICEF/2008/15) as head of the delegation. The report was presented in conjunction with the discussion of the draft country programme document for Niger for 2009-2013. Thanking the Government of Niger for providing support and access at every level, Ambassador Hill said the country acknowledged that it was battling enormous challenges, from malnutrition to low levels of education. He said that the delegation was highly impressed with the effectiveness of the UNICEF operation, particularly the ways in which it worked with other organizations, including United Nations agencies, and with the Government of Niger. The UNICEF team, he said, demonstrated a real sense of mission and was appreciated by the Government and the broader community. Ambassador Hill emphasized the support of UNICEF and its partners for decentralization; providing quality services in health, education, water supply, nutrition and child protection; capacity-building; and addressing the challenge of early marriage, which is linked into the broader issue of education and harmful traditional practices.

G. UNICEF Child Protection Strategy (item 9)

105. The Executive Board had before it the UNICEF Child Protection Strategy (E/ICEF/2008/Rev.1) in support of the UNICEF medium-term strategic plan. The Executive Board adopted the Strategy in decision 2008/12 (see annex).

106. Following the adoption of the decision on the Child Protection Strategy, one delegation made two points about the strategy: (a) paragraph 43 of the document made a clear distinction between emergencies and other types of violations of child protection principles, and therefore the list of specific categories of violations mentioned were not the same as in the emergency section; and (b) it was important to emphasize that the reference document mentioned in paragraph 60 had not yet been published. The delegation expressed interest in commenting on the document once it was published.

H. Address by the Chairperson of the Global Staff Association (item 10)

107. The Chairperson of the UNICEF Global Staff Association said that staff safety and security was the top concern for UNICEF staff members around the world, especially in light of the bombing of United Nations premises in Algiers in December 2007. She noted that the Association had raised several security needs: the safety of United Nations premises; adequate protection of national staff; stress counselling for staff; extra protection for staff working in high-risk areas or politicized situations; and assurance of the safety of female staff in countries where women's rights are less respected.

108. The Chairperson also stated other concerns: the declining purchasing power of staff salaries, which required methods for re-assessment of salaries and benefits; and the need for staff development, with a focus on gender balance and national professional staff.

109. She cited the positive relationship of UNICEF management with the organization's staff associations as a United Nations best practice that should be continued.

I. Other matters (item 11)

Updates on the UNICEF response to natural disasters in Myanmar and China

110. The Regional director for East Asia and the Pacific gave an update on the UNICEF response to the natural disasters in Myanmar and China in 2008, which included the following information: The cyclone in Myanmar in May 2008 had affected almost 2.5 million people, including nearly 200,000 children under five. As agreed within the United Nations system emergency response, UNICEF had assumed leadership for the coordination of humanitarian assistance in the clusters of nutrition, child protection, and water, sanitation and hygiene, and was a co-lead for education, together with Save the Children UK. UNICEF had participated in the development of the inter-agency flash appeal; the UNICEF portion of the request for resources was $25 million. UNICEF was also participating in a needs assessment with the Government and other partners.

111. This report was followed by an update on the UNICEF response to the May 2008 earthquake in the Sichuan province of China, highlighting the following information: The human toll included an estimated 69,000 people dead, 373,000 injured and 18,000 missing. The UNICEF Representative in China also chaired the United Nations Disaster Management Team and therefore played a critical role in supporting the Resident Coordinator in leading the United Nations response as a whole. As part of its response, UNICEF had implemented ecologically adapted water distribution and village sanitation

services. A major aim was to quickly shift from immediate relief to long-term recovery through the use of pre-existing programmes, including disaster preparedness planning and response.

112. The Director of Emergency Programmes further noted that from the onset of the emergency, UNICEF had been working on the ground very closely with WHO and WFP, which led the clusters in health and food, respectively.

113. The representative of Myanmar thanked UNICEF for its efforts, noting that UNICEF was among the first to assist the victims in his country. He said that the early set-up of disease surveillance mechanisms had ensured there had been no outbreak of communicable diseases. He noted that the Ministry of Education of Myanmar, which benefited from UNICEF assistance in repairing schools and providing educational materials, was able to reopen schools in the affected areas in the first week of June.

114. The representative of China thanked UNICEF for the support given to her Government in its unprecedented emergency relief operation. UNICEF had provided tents, medical supplies and water purification tablets through the Government. Although aftershocks and secondary disasters continued to threaten the devastated areas, resettlement and post-disaster reconstruction had moved to the forefront of the agenda, and the Government was assessing the extent of the damage and losses so that a rehabilitation and reconstruction plan could be drawn up within three months.

J. Closing of the session (item 12)

115. In her closing statement, the Executive Director expressed her appreciation to the many delegates who had travelled from their capitals to attend the session. She also conveyed her appreciation of the Executive Board's endorsement of the Child Protection Strategy, saying that protection for children was an important part of the organization's work, covering many issues, from violence against children to child labour to child soldiers. On the matter of partnerships, she acknowledged that a considerable amount of work remained, but said she believed that it was important to recognize how better to collaborate with others to find solutions and produce sustainable results and outcomes for children.

116. The Executive Director reiterated that UNICEF was strongly committed to incorporating a gender perspective into the work of the organization. She said that addressing gender issues was critical to development, adding that much of the work of UNICEF in gender, whether girls' education, protection of women of girls, addressing harmful practices or mothers' and children's health, was carried out together as an integrated package.

117. She said that the discussion on the Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative revealed the importance of integrating various responses when addressing the situation caused by the rise in global food prices. She noted that it was critical to address not only the immediate needs of food aid but, more importantly, the longer-term issue of food production. UNICEF would continue to be very engaged in collaborations in the field, she said, so that children would not suffer from undernutrition, which was a contributing cause to about one third of under-five mortality.

118. Regarding the field visits of the Executive Board, the Executive Director said she was pleased to learn how much more engaged the Executive Board members were after they had been to the field, seeing first hand the work of staff, often in the most difficult circumstances. The joint field visit to Haiti further demonstrated how important it was to witness how the integrated United Nations missions were operating and how UNICEF operated in the field as part of an integrated mission in a difficult environment.

119. She emphasized that the update on the UNICEF response to the emergencies in Myanmar and China had shown how the agencies of the United Nations system had together taken on a tremendous responsibility to assist the victims.

120. Finally, the Executive Director stressed that UNICEF management took staff security very seriously and that it was working within the inter-agency process as well as with the UNICEF security staff on determining how best to mitigate the risks of staff members working under very difficult and often dangerous circumstances. She said she appreciated the working relationship management had with the staff associations in addressing this and other matters.

121. The President, in closing, thanked the Executive Board and the secretariat for their constructive cooperation, which had led to some important decisions. The agreement on the Child Protection Strategy was crucial, as protecting children was one of the core activities of UNICEF. He noted that the decision on the implementation of the UNICEF gender policy had underscored how important it was to work for the rights of women and girls in order to facilitate development. Discussions had also highlighted the global food-price crisis, indicating that this issue would become increasingly significant in the work of UNICEF. The President also noted that the update on the emergency response in Myanmar and China had demonstrated once again the importance of the work of UNICEF in disaster situations. Finally, he indicated the importance of the midterm review of the UNICEF MTSP as an agenda item for the second regular session and said that the Executive Board during that session would revisit the issue of a possible extension of the MTSP, following several informal consultations that will take place on the subject prior to the session.

Annex

Decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its annual session of 2008

2008/8. Draft country programme documents

(documents E/ICEF/2008/P/L.4 – E/ICEF/2008/P/L.12 and Corr.1)

The Executive Board

Approves the aggregate indicative budget for the following country programmes of cooperation:

Region/country	*Period*	*Regular resources*	*Other resources*	*Document E/ICEF/2008/*
West and Central Africa				
Benin	2009-2013	23 107 500	36 900 000	P/L.4 & Corr.1
Republic of Congo	2009-2013	5 634 000	25 000 000	P/L.5
Niger	2009-2013	84 672 000	80 000 000	P/L.6
Nigeria	2009-2012	152 960 400	302 690 000	P/L.7 & Corr.1
The Americas and the Caribbean				
Ecuador	2009	690 300	5 000 000	P/L.8
Guatemala	2009	801 900	4 619 500	P/L.9 & Corr.1
South Asia				
Afghanistan	2009	30 168 900	60 884 000	P/L.10 & Corr.1
Pakistan	2009-2010	28 683 000	86 700 000	P/L.11
Middle East and North Africa				
Sudan	2009-2012	30 427 000	240 000 000	P/L.12 & Corr.1

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2008/9. Recommendation for approval of additional other resources for approved country programmes

The Executive Board

Approves a total of $251,230,000 in other resources for approved country programmes for the 27 countries listed in the table below (document E/ICEF/2008/P/L.13) for the remaining periods of these programmes, subject to the availability of other resources contributions.

Proposed increases to other resources (OR) ceilings for approved country programmes for 2008
(In United States dollars)

Region/Country	*Document E/ICEF/*	*Programme duration*	*Approved OR ceiling*	*OR allotments to date*	*Additional OR to be approved*	*Total OR ceiling*
Eastern and Southern Africa			*(A)*		*(B)*	*(A+B)*
Botswana	2007/P/L.40	2008-2009	4 000 000	3 188 870	2 000 000	6 000 000
Burundi	2007/P/L.4	2008-2008	7 930 000	8 975 500	6 570 000	14 500 000
Namibia	2005/P/L.1 and Corr.1	2006-2010	21 665 000	7 241 000	6 000 000	27 665 000
Somalia	2007/P/L.39	2008-2009	48 000 000	29 035 760	12 000 000	60 000 000
Swaziland	2005/P/L.30 and Corr.1	2006-2010	21 250 000	17 908 730	15 000 000	36 250 000
West and Central Africa						
Burkina Faso	2005/P/L.3	2006-2010	40 500 000	17 915 240	20 000 000	60 500 000
Côte d'Ivoire	2007/P/L.10	2008	15 000 000	17 260 500	14 000 000	29 000 000
Gabon	2006/P/L.8	2007-2011	4 160 000	1 826 750	5 050 000	9 210 000
Mauritania	2002/P/L.7	2003-2008	18 000 000	15 145 450	3 000 000	21 000 000
Nigeria	2007/P/L.12	2008-2008	49 000 000	53 385 430	17 500 000	66 500 000
The Americas and the Caribbean						
Haiti	2007/P/L.50	2008	12 200 000	10 077 000	4 950 000	17 150 000
Honduras	2006/P/L.47	2007-2011	9 745 000	4 949 660	14 000 000	23 745 000
Venezuela (Bolivarian Rep. of)	2007/P/L.48	2008	1 890 000	2 411 320	1 900 000	3 790 000
Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States						
Albania	2005/P/L.13	2006-2010	12 000 000	10 181 580	4 500 000	16 500 000
Armenia	2004/P/L.10	2005-2009	5 069 000	4 190 385	1 000 000	6 069 000
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2004/P/L.12/ Rev.1	2005-2008	13 000 000	10 312 170	2 000 000	15 000 000
Georgia	2005/P/L.16	2006-2010	6 000 000	5 788 774	4 000 000	10 000 000
Montenegro	2006/P/L.60	2007-2009	2 000 000	1 176 400	1 000 000	3 000 000
Romania	2004/P/L.15	2005-2009	11 615 000	8 634 700	3 385 000	15 000 000
Turkey	2005/P/L.18	2006-2010	25 000 000	15 891 170	15 000 000	40 000 000
East Asia and Pacific						
Cambodia	2005/P/L.7	2006-2010	68 970 000	60 406 340	4 940 000	73 910 000
China	2005 P/L.8	2006-2010	40 000 000	31 294 590	42 000 000	82 000 000
Myanmar	2005/P/L.9	2006-2010	65 000 000	58 162 500	28 000 000	93 000 000
Timor-Leste	2007/P/L.18	2008	10 000 000	9 856 650	11 000 000	21 000 000

South Asia					85 940 000	
Maldives	2007/P/L.21	2008-2010	3 000 000	785 853	1 784 000	4 784 000
Middle East and North Africa						
Iran (Islamic Rep. of)	2004/P/L.21	2005-2009	9 000 000	9 158 000	4 780 000	13 780 000
Morocco	2006/P/L.21	2007-2011	11 000 000	9 415 623	5 871 000	16 871 000
Total increase					**251 230 000**	

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2008/10. Evaluation of gender policy implementation in UNICEF: planned follow-up action

The Executive Board

1. *Reaffirms* gender equality as one of the cross-cutting strategies of the medium-term strategic plan (MTSP) of UNICEF;

2. *Recognizes* the importance of periodic evaluations of the implementation of policies related to gender equality, one of the cross-cutting strategies of the MTSP, in order to improve performance in this area;

3. *Expresses* concern about the shortcomings identified in the evaluation report;

4. *Requests* UNICEF to present to the Executive Board at its first regular session of 2009 a management response to all recommendations of the Evaluation of gender policy implementation in UNICEF, including actions and timeframes for completion;

5. Further *requests* UNICEF to ensure and track timely implementation of the evaluation recommendations in accordance with the management response, and to develop a tracking and monitoring framework to measure progress in implementation;

6. *Requests* UNICEF to track and monitor both allocations and expenditures for gender equality results, as part of its results-based management approach;

7. *Requests* that the annual report of the Executive Director includes reporting on progress in achieving gender equality results, particularly at the outcome and impact levels, as an integral element.

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2008/11. Annual report of the Executive Director

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the "Annual Report of the Executive Director: progress and achievements against the medium-term strategic plan" (MTSP) (E/ICEF/2008/10);

2. *Welcomes* the continued progress made by UNICEF in strengthening strategic focus and partnerships to support accelerated national and international efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and other national and internationally agreed goals for the well-being of children;

3. *Recognizes* that many countries still face challenges in the five focus areas, and in this regard urges UNICEF to continue to strengthen its support to these countries, in particular in developing national capacities, with a view to tackling the remaining challenges;

4. *Appreciates* the overview provided by the annual report of outcomes and results of activities undertaken by UNICEF and its partners in the five focus areas of the MTSP and further *takes note* of the accompanying data companion that provides detailed, updated information on key trends and indicators; and *requests* that this report be presented with the subsequent annual reports of the Executive Director;

5. *Stresses* the importance of the annual report as a key part of UNICEF reporting to the Executive Board on results and outcomes in the implementation of the MTSP, and looks forward to the report at the second regular session of 2008 on the midterm review;

6. *Requests* UNICEF to give high priority in the annual report to providing information and analysis on key challenges in achieving results in each focus area to support acceleration in progress towards critical goals and targets for children, especially in the countries facing the greatest challenges in achieving the goals and targets;

7. *Calls on* UNICEF to continue to improve performance across the Management Performance indicators and *urges* UNICEF to improve the proportion of recruitment of regular and emergency posts completed within 90 [illegible]

8. *Welcomes* the 10 initiatives aimed at improving organizational effectiveness and *requests* UNICEF to provide a conference room paper on the implications and impact of the ongoing 10 initiatives on improving organizational performance at the first regular session of 2009.

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2008/12. The UNICEF child protection strategy in support of the medium-term strategic plan

The Executive Board

1. *Reaffirms* the medium-term strategic plan (MTSP) as the guiding framework for all areas of UNICEF programming;

2. *Endorses* the 'UNICEF Child Protection Strategy' (E/ICEF/2008/5/Rev.1) as the UNICEF support strategy document for programmes and actions in support of child protection, developed for the implementation of the MTSP;

3. *Requests* the Executive Director to ensure that UNICEF increases its efforts to further develop national capacities to improve outcomes related to child protection, as outlined in this support strategy for the MTSP.

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